

## Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY IO/UNP:JPLORENZ/ATP

APPROVED BY NEA:AATHERTON

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NEA/EGY:DNEWBERRY

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S/S: MR. ORTIZ

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O R 030223Z DEC 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 294516

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, XF

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR GHORBAL ASKS US SUPPORT FOR EGYPTIAN  
RESOLUTION ON RESUMPTION OF GENEVA CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY. AMBASSADOR GHORBAL CALLED ON ASSISTANT  
SECRETARY AATHERTON DECEMBER 1 TO REQUEST OUR SUPPORT FOR  
A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CON-  
FERENCE WHICH EGYPT PLANS TO INTRODUCE IN THE UPCOMING  
UNGA MIDDLE EAST DEBATE. THE HEART OF THE RESOLUTION IS A  
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REQUEST THAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL CONVENE IMMEDIATELY AFTER

SUBMISSION BY THE SYG OF A FEBRUARY 1 REPORT ON THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. (TEXT OF DRAFT RESOLUTION CONTAINED PARA 8 BELOW. WE UNDERSTAND FROM USUN THAT TEXT CURRENT IN NEW YORK USES MARCH 1 RATHER THAN FEBRUARY 1 AND, FURTHER, OMITTS REFERENCE TO "PARTICIPATION OF ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.") ATHERTON SAID HIS INITIAL REACTION WAS THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO PRESS THIS RESOLUTION WHICH WOULD IN EFFECT FORCE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION TO ADOPT A PUBLIC POSITION ON THE MIDDLE EAST SOON AFTER IT HAD TAKEN OFFICE. ATHERTON SAID HE PERSONALLY DOUBTED USG COULD SUPPORT PROPOSED EGYPTIAN DRAFT. END SUMMARY.

2. GHORBAL NOTED AT THE OUTSET THAT HIS INSTRUCTION TO

SEEK US SUPPORT WAS PART OF A GENERAL APPROACH TO A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS. HE CONSIDERED THE DRAFT COMPLETELY INNOCUOUS: "IT MIGHT EVEN HAVE BEEN WRITTEN IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT." IT CALLED FOR RESUMPTION OF THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE, BUT NEITHER SET A DATE NOR SOUGHT TO SPECIFY THE PARTIES.

3. ATHERTON REPLIED THAT HE COULD GIVE ONLY HIS FIRST, PERSONAL REACTIONS. IN HIS VIEW, HE SAID, IT WOULD BE A TACTICAL MISTAKE TO CALL FOR THE SC TO MEET ON THE MIDDLE EAST SHORTLY AFTER THE NEW ADMINISTRATION HAD TAKEN OFFICE. THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD NOT HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO ANALYZE COMPLETELY THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION AND DECIDE HOW TO PROCEED. ANY SC MEETING ONCE MIDDLE EAST WAS BOUND TO BECOME CONTENTIOUS. WE WOULD HAVE TO TAKE POSITIONS WHICH WOULD MAKE ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER UNHAPPY. THIS WOULD PUT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IN A VERY DIFFICULT POSITION IF IT WERE TO MAINTAIN THE CREDIBILITY AND CONFIDENCE OF BOTH SIDES ESSENTIAL FOR PROGRESS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT. ATHERTON SAID THAT WHILE EGYPT MUST OF COURSE DECIDE WHAT ITS INTERESTS REQUIRED, IT SEEMED TO HIM THAT FORCING THE NEW ADMINISTRATION TO CHOOSE SIDES SO SOON WAS NOT WISE EVEN FROM EGYPT'S OWN STAND-POINT.

4. GHORBAL REPLIED THAT THE RESOLUTION WAS NOT GEARED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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PUT ANYONE ON THE SPOT OR TO PRESS THE NEW ADMINISTRATION PREMATURELY. PEOPLE HAD BEEN PLEASED TO HEAR THE PRESIDENT-ELECT SAY MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS WERE A MATTER OF FIRST PRIORITY, AND THE RESOLUTION WAS THEREFORE DRAFTED TO CONVEY A SENSE OF URGENCY. ITS PURPOSE WAS TO CONTINUE THE MOMENTUM TOWARDS AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT. GHORBAL SAID HE DID NOT THINK THE RESOLUTION MEANT THAT THE SC HAD TO MEET "WITHIN A FEW DAYS" OF THE UNSYG'S

REPORT.

5. ATHERTON SAID HE ASSUMED "IMMEDIATELY" MEANT WHAT IT SAID AND WOULD CERTAINLY BE INTERPRETED BY SOME AS MEANING A MATTER OF DAYS. AS FOR THE NEED FOR MOVEMENT TO REGAIN THE MOMENTUM, THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US. BUT A SC MEETING WAS NOT THE ONLY WAY -- AND FREQUENTLY NOT THE BEST WAY -- TO SHOW URGENCY AND COMMITMENT. ATHERTON SAID HE VERY MUCH DOUBTED WE COULD SUPPORT THE EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION, EVEN THOUGH THE OVERALL TONE OF THE RESOLUTION WAS MODERATE. HE NOTED ONE OTHER PROBLEM: THE CALL FOR "THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL PARTIES CONCERNED" WOULD FORCE A PREMATURE STATEMENT OF POLICY BY THE US AND OTHERS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION. THIS WAS A MATTER THAT UNQUESTIONABLY HAD

TO BE DEALT WITH, BUT IN NEGOTIATIONS RATHER THAN UNDEBATE. (WE SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED FROM USUN THAT PHRASE "WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL PARTIES CONCERNED" HAS BEEN DROPPED FROM EGYPTIAN DRAFT.)

6. ATHERTON UNDERTOOK TO REPORT GHORBAL'S APPROACH AND CONVEY ANY FURTHER REACTIONS.

7. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF DRAFT RESOLUTION LEFT BY GHORBAL:

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING DISCUSSED THE ITEM ENTITLED THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST,

TAKING NOTE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT ON THE ITEM AND HIS INITIATIVE OF APRIL 1ST 1976.

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GRAVELY CONCERNED AT THE LACK OF PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A JUST AND LASTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST,

CONVINCED THAT ANY RELAXATION IN THE SEARCH FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT COVERING ALL ASPECTS OF THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM TO ACHIEVE A JUST PEACE IN THE AREA CONSTITUTES A GRAVE THREAT TO THE PROSPECTS OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS WELL AS A THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY.

CALLS FOR THE RESUMPTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

REQUESTS THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO RESUME CONTACTS WITH THE

PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS INITIATIVE OF 1 APRIL 1976, IN PREPARATION TO THE RESUMPTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

REQUESTS THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE RESULTS OF HIS CONTACTS AND THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST NOT LATER THAN THE FIRST OF FEBRUARY 1977.

REQUESTS THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO CONVENE IMMEDIATELY SUBSEQUENT TO THE SUBMISSION BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE REPORT REFERRED TO ABOVE IN ORDER TO CONSIDER THE SITUATION IN THE AREA IN THE LIGHT OF THAT REPORT, AND TO PROMOTE THE PROCESS TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JUST AND LASTING PEACE IN THE AREA.

REQUESTS FURTHER THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO INFORM THE CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST OF THIS SITUATION.

ROBINSON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** RESOLUTIONS, PEACE PLANS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 DEC 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** coburnhl  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STATE294516  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** JPLORENZ/ATP  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760447-0311  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19761274/aaaacmgq.tel  
**Line Count:** 190  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN SS  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** coburnhl  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 23 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <23 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <16 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** AMBASSADOR GHORBAL ASKS US SUPPORT FOR EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION ON RESUMPTION OF GENEVA CONFERENCE  
**TAGS:** PFOR, XF, US, UN, GENEVA  
**To:** CAIRO USUN NEW YORK  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006